A Framework for Family Development

Protecting Children Within Their Families and Communities

DOC
BC
C50422C5
D:F72
2002
c.3

Child and Family Development Division
Ministry of Children and Family Development
July 2002

LEGISLATIVE LIBRARY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
3 3298 00274 8730

Table of Contents

Introduction 3

Family Development Within the Child Protection System 3

Strategic Context for Family Development 4

Sources of the Family Development Framework 5

Terms Used in the Family Development Framework 5

The Context for Family Development 7

Background 7

Family Development and the Role of the Family and Community 7

Family Development Within the Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Services 8

Family Development Within the System of Care 9

Overview of the Family Development Framework 10

Goals of Family Development 11

Roles and Responsibilities in Family Development 12

Assessment and Planning in Family Development 14

Outcomes of Family Development 16

Next Steps 17

Introduction

The framework for family development outlines for provincial and regional authorities a preventive approach to working with families in situations where children or youth may be at risk of coming into the Director's care.

The framework sets out a family strengths-based approach that is intended to reduce the incidence of children needing protective action, particularly responses that require children to be removed from their families and placed in the Director's care.

The framework reflects a number of important new directions in ministry policy, including the move toward regional governance and the devolution of the role of the Director to the regional level. The family development framework is intended to enable regional authorities, in partnership with others in the community, to design and deliver effective community-based programs and services, appropriate to the needs of their local populations.

With this purpose in mind, the family development framework:

- defines a common approach to providing services to families and children, particularly those who are at risk of coming into the Director's care.
- sets the direction for what the ministry intends to achieve through child welfare practice and the allocation of family development resources in a community-based service delivery system.
- is intended to assist regional authorities to identify and develop evidence-based programs and services that will strengthen the ability of families and communities to care for and protect children who would otherwise be at risk of entering the Director's care.

The intended result of the family development framework is a more effective and responsive community-centred support system that will produce real improvements in the capacity of vulnerable families to care for their children.

Family Development Within the Child Protection System

The family development framework reflects the principles of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* (*CFCSA*) and is meant to be consistent with existing practice standards. As such, the family development framework is intended to build on the strengths of the existing provincial child protection system.

Consistent with the *CFCSA*, the framework confirms the safety and well-being of children as the paramount considerations. It seeks to balance those considerations with the fundamental importance of the family in the growth and development of children, captured in the following guiding principles of the *CFCSA*:

- a family is the preferred environment for the care and upbringing of children and the responsibility for the protection of children rests primarily with the parents
- if, with available support services, a family can provide a safe and nurturing environment for a child, support services should be provided

To balance the importance of children's safety and well-being with the need to preserve and support families requires a shift towards responses that increase the protective capacity of vulnerable families. A new family strengths-based assessment process, which will be introduced within the next few months, will become the initial lens applied at intake. This strengths-based

assessment will link to risk assessment and to other specialized forms of assessment, program areas and services, when necessary.

The Strategic Context for Family Development

The family development framework is a critical component of the ministry's approach to child welfare as described in the ministry's service plan. Integrated within the service plan, the framework reflects the ministry's vision, mission, principles, mandate and stategic shifts.

■ Vision

The Ministry of Children and Family Development envisions a province of healthy children and responsible families living in safe, caring and inclusive communities.

■ Mission

The mission of the Ministry of Children and Family Development is to promote and develop the capacity of families and communities to care for and protect vulnerable children and youth, and support adults with developmental disabilities.

■ Role and Mandate

The ministry's role and mandate is to:

- advance the safety and well-being of vulnerable children, youth and adults
- advance early childhood development through strategic investments, and
- advance and support a community-based system of family services that promotes innovation, equity and accountability.

■ Principles

The following principles guide the ministry in its work:

- Families have the right and primary responsibility to protect and support the growth and development of children and youth.
- Government must acknowledge and reinforce the capacity of communities to support and enhance the resilience of children and families.
- The ministry should provide the minimal intervention necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of our most vulnerable community members.

■ Strategic Shifts

The family development framework is consistent with the six strategic shifts being undertaken by the ministry:

1. To open, accountable and transparent relationships.
2. To enabling communities to develop and deliver services within a consolidated, coherent community-based service delivery system.
3. To making strategic investments in capacity and resiliency building and providing funding for programs and services known to work. Capacity, in this context, means ability and potential. Resiliency is the ability to recover from challenging situations. The ministry believes that individuals, families, and communities have the capacity to

successfully face and overcome challenges, provided that they are given the opportunities and necessary supports to build and integrate this capacity.

4. To promoting family and community capacity to protect children and to support child and family development.
5. To a community-based service delivery system that promotes choice, innovation and shared responsibility.
6. To building capacity within Aboriginal communities to deliver a full range of services with emphasis on early childhood and family development.

Sources of the Family Development Framework

The family development framework draws on the work of a number of recent studies of the ministry's programs and services, and reflects the research of other Canadian and international jurisdictions.

The following documents, in particular, provide a comprehensive analysis of the need for change and recommended shifts in the ministry's approach:

- *Working with Community to Support Children, Youth and Families: A System of Care*
- *Ministry of Children and Family Development Service Plan 2002/2003 to 2004/2005*
- *Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Services*
- *Draft Report on Family Support Services* (draft report of the audit conducted by Internal Audit and Advisory Services of the Ministry of Finance)

The framework builds upon consultations with regional staff, headquarters staff, and representatives of family and child service agencies in B.C. regarding the development of a comprehensive, community-based system of care for children, youth and families and their communities.

Terms Used in the Family Development Framework

capacity: The ability or potential of an individual, group or community to cope with stress and/or resolve problems. The purpose of the family development framework is to increase the capacity of families and communities to protect and care for their children and youth.

evidence-based: Describes programs and services that:

- have proven their ability to increase resilience in children, youth and their families and, where appropriate, to prevent children and youth from coming into the care of the ministry, or
- are well-designed and promising programs worthy of continued scrutiny while their effectiveness and efficiency is being established

integrated case management (ICM): The process of working collaboratively when a child or youth and family require services from more than one provider. It includes joint assessment, planning, service delivery, monitoring and review, and is documented by a single, collaborative plan. The purpose of ICM is to improve outcomes for children, youth and their families by:

- ensuring that the service providers and the child or youth and family have all the necessary and appropriate information with which to plan and deliver services
- reducing fragmentation, gaps and overlaps in service

- providing a complete picture of the needs of the child or youth and family, and the strengths they bring to address those needs
- increasing collaboration among the various service sectors
- involving, whenever possible, the child or youth and family in the process

integrated case management/wraparound: Integrated case management and wraparound approaches represent similar principles and desired outcomes, and are therefore referred to as ICM/wraparound in the family development framework.

promising practice/programs: Practice, services, and programs that have not yet proven their effectiveness but are expected to in time.

resiliency: The ability of a child, youth, family or community to succeed or cope even in the face of significant adversity. This ability changes over time, and is enhanced by protective factors in the individual, system and environment.

service plan: In the context of family development, the service plan is developed collaboratively with the family and focuses on interventions and services that strengthen the capacity of family members, informal helpers and the community to care for, protect and support the growth and development of children and youth who might otherwise be placed in the care of the Director.

strengths-based: An approach practice that taps into the resources, talents, knowledge, motivation, and environmental assets of individuals, families and communities.

system of care: The ministry's model of service delivery, as described in *Working with Community to Support Children, Youth and Families: A System of Care.*

target population: Those children and youth who are at risk of coming into the care of the Director, and their families.

vulnerable: The degree to which children, youth and families are "vulnerable" is determined by the presence and severity of those factors, alone or in combination, that decrease family capacity to care for and protect children and youth and increase the likelihood of children and youth coming into the Director's care.

wraparound: A flexible, common-sense approach that recognizes that people are complex and different, and have a great variety of needs. It is a process:

- that recognizes and builds upon the strengths of children, youth and their families by ensuring inclusion and leadership in their own planning
- by which services, both formal and informal, can be partnered, created and/or modified to meet the distinct needs of a child/family
- that turns a group of services and people in the community into an efficient system of care

The Context for Family Development

Background

Family support services have long been acknowledged as a critical component of an effective child welfare system. Family support services contribute to family wellness, help keep children with their families and enhance the ability of parents to care for their children. Recent research shows that these services, when provided in an appropriate and timely way, can promote family functioning and help prevent child maltreatment, and thereby contribute to a reduction in the number of children coming into government care.

At present, all regions in the province offer a range of family support services, including parent training, counselling, short-term respite for parents, and in-home supports provided by homemakers, child/youth care workers and family support workers. However, while family support services are generally available, most often they are provided to children and families only after a child protection investigation finds that a child needs protection. The opportunity to strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect is often missed.

The challenge of balancing the need to support and strengthen families as a way to prevent child maltreatment with the need to protect children who are at risk is highlighted in the findings of a recent audit of the ministry's family support services. According to the audit report, over the past 10 years, family support services have become largely responsive rather than preventive.

The audit found that in 2000/2001 approximately 80% of the contracted family support services were designated for protection services and programs. While these services were needed to protect children who were found to be at risk of abuse and neglect, the resources available for proactive, preventive interventions had decreased.

At the same time, the number of children in care in British Columbia has climbed to a rate of 11 per 1,000 population, compared with a national average of 9 per 1,000.

These and other research findings clearly indicate the need for targeted, appropriate family support services as an effective approach to preventing child maltreatment and reducing the number of children needing to be removed from their families and placed in the Director's care.

Family Development and the Role of the Family and Community

The family development framework reflects the ministry's strategic shift towards enabling communities to develop and deliver services within a community-based service delivery system and at the same time build family and community capacity to protect children and to support child and family development.

Increasing the capacity of families and communities to care for and protect vulnerable children requires a partnership among the many parties involved. It requires that regional authorities and the ministry work in partnership with other child and family service systems, agencies and informal supports to identify priorities and to design effective programs and services. It also requires that communities and families be partners in the process, rather than passive recipients.

The role of family in caring for and protecting children and youth means that families must be involved as partners in all aspects of the delivery system, from program planning, to assessment

and evaluation. To be effective, family development programs and services must also take into consideration the full breadth of family. A family may encompass all members of the extended family who live in the same household, selected kin or all kin who live in the area, grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins who assume and perform family roles and members of the child or youth's cultural community. A broader view of the family can often reveal innovative arrangements to help keep children in their homes and strengthen both family and community capacity.

Communities, too, need to be involved in designing, planning, implementing and evaluating family development programs and services. In addition to this partnership role, communities have a role in determining a number of important conditions that contribute to the likelihood of positive outcomes for vulnerable children, youth and families, particularly:

- affordable and appropriate housing in safe neighbourhoods that provide:
  - access to resources and professional services, schools, work and child care
  - appropriate play areas and adequate recreational programs and facilities
  - effective public safety programs and services
- access to resources and social supports, including
  - opportunities for social engagement of children, youth and families
  - access to extended family, friends, neighbours, community-based family support and mutual aid programs
  - services that are reflective and inclusive of the cultural traditions and preferences of all community members
- caring school environments in which children and youth
  - have access to experiences that can enhance their self-esteem and intellectual and social competence
  - feel secure, respected and cared for
  - are challenged by high but achievable expectations
- a positive community climate, in which
  - community members support neighbourhood and community cohesion
  - there is shared involvement, responsibility and leadership
  - there are strong formal and informal social support networks

Family Development Within the Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Services

The family development framework is intended to facilitate the outcomes of the *Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Services*.

The Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Services contains four priorities:

- to improve working relationships with Aboriginal communities
- to improve capacity within the Aboriginal communities to deliver services
- to improve service to Aboriginal clients
- to co-ordinate efforts at all levels of government to support Aboriginal services

Aboriginal children in care comprise 30 percent of all children in care averaged across the regions, with several regions reporting near or over 50 percent, whereas Aboriginal children make up only 8 percent of the total B.C. child population. Given the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal children and families on ministry caseloads, the family development framework is intended to support the development of programs and services that will reduce these numbers.

Many First Nations and other Aboriginal communities are in the process of obtaining delegation and enabling agreements to design and deliver their own services. The ministry is committed to the creation of effective, culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal children, youth and families who continue to receive services, by choice or necessity, from the ministry.

Within this document, references to regional authorities are intended to include soon-to-be-established Aboriginal child welfare authorities.

Family Development Within the System of Care

Building the capacity of families and communities is a critical part of the ministry's emerging system of care (presented in *Working with Community to Support Children, Youth and Families: A System of Care*). As described in the system of care document, "... families, even those in crisis, and communities, even those with apparently few resources, have unique strengths that can be utilized to help in addressing their own issues."

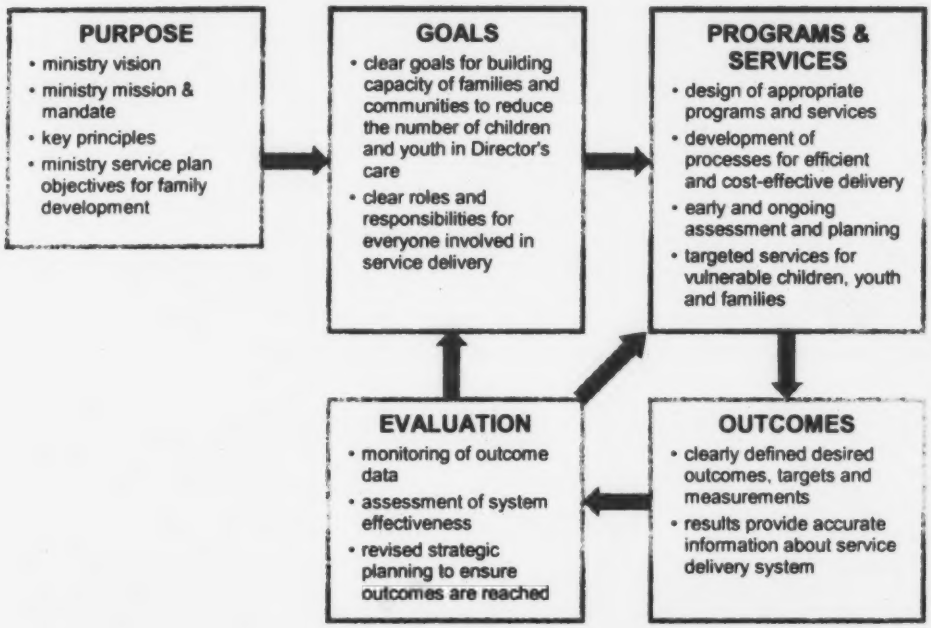
Consistent with the system of care, the family development framework emphasizes the importance of focusing on *fit* rather than *fix*; that is, it recognizes the need to target services so that they fit the real needs of vulnerable children, youth and families, rather than fixing problems after they occur, especially by bringing children into care.

A number of the key themes identified in the proposed system of care document are significant for the family development framework. These include:

- building on the capacities and strengths of families, neighbourhoods and communities
- placing greater emphasis on early and ongoing assessment and planning
- making services available to children and youth where they live
- placing greater emphasis on wraparound/integrated case management
- improving access for families seeking help
- providing a gate or access to services that does not require the involvement of the child protection system

The companion document to *Working with Community to Support Children, Youth and Their Families: A System of Care* provides detailed information on family development programs and services that are consistent with the themes of the system of care and that represent best or promising practice.

Overview of the Family Development Framework


PURPOSE
• ministry vision
• ministry mission & mandate
• key principles
• ministry service plan objectives for family development
GOALS
• clear goals for building capacity of families and communities to reduce the number of children and youth in Director's care
• clear roles and responsibilities for everyone involved in service delivery
PROGRAMS & SERVICES
• design of appropriate programs and services
• development of processes for efficient and cost-effective delivery
• early and ongoing assessment and planning
• targeted services for vulnerable children, youth and families
EVALUATION
• monitoring of outcome data
• assessment of system effectiveness
• revised strategic planning to ensure outcomes are reached
OUTCOMES
• clearly defined desired outcomes, targets and measurements
• results provide accurate information about service delivery system

The framework for family development is summarized in the diagram above. The implementation of the framework moves from left to right, with each step operationalizing the previous ones. While the basic framework has been developed, much of the service delivery infrastructure and details of some parts of the framework are still under development and will be completed over the coming months.

Purpose: The framework's starting point is the purpose of family development, which arises from the vision of the desired state of affairs for children, youth and families, the ministry's mandate, and the key principles that guide the ministry's work. These are found on page 4.

Goals: The goals of family development state what provincial and regional authorities are expected to work toward in designing and developing programs and services that embody the purpose of family development. The goals of family development are presented on page 11.

Programs and Services: The development and delivery of programs and services reflect the goals for family development. Regional authorities have responsibility for ensuring these services and programs are outcome-based and targeted to children and youth who are at risk of coming into care and their families. Effective service delivery depends on ongoing, comprehensive assessment and planning to ensure the right fit between the needs of the family and the service plan.

Outcomes: Clearly defined outcomes, accompanied by performance measures and targets, reveal whether the intended results are being achieved and provide direction for future planning.

Evaluation: Program evaluation is the responsibility of the regional authorities. Headquarters is responsible for evaluating the sytemic or organizational outcomes achieved by the regional authorities and for ensuring strategic plans are revised accordingly.

Goals of Family Development

The following goals of family development define what the ministry expects regional authorities to achieve through programs, services and the use of resources. The goals are consistent with the ministry's key principles (see page 4) and with the key themes in the system of care and the strategic plan for Aboriginal services.

The goals of family development are:

1. To strengthen the capacity of families and communities to care for and protect vulnerable children and youth who might otherwise be placed in the care of the Director.
2. To promote the natural ability of each child, youth and family to determine their own needs and goals, and the ways in which these could best be met.
3. To recognise and strengthen the informal support systems within extended families and communities to which the child, youth and family could turn in times of hardship or crisis.
4. To improve access to programs and services that build on the family's own strengths and resources in order to strengthen the family's capacity to support the healthy growth and development of children and youth.
5. To place more emphasis on early and ongoing assessment and planning, as well as integrated case management/wraparound processes, in the delivery of services.
6. To promote and support the development of community-based programs and services that are found to be effective in promoting family wellness, resilience and capacity to care for and protect children and youth.
7. To work with Aboriginal and other cultural and ethnic communities to ensure that programs and services are culturally appropriate and accessible to families in those communities.
8. To develop community-based partnerships with health, education, and employment and economic assistance, as well as the contracted services and private sectors, to promote family wellness and the prevention of child maltreatment.
9. To conduct ongoing evaluations of family development programs and services using outcome indicators that are based on research evidence and input from families and community partners.
10. To target resources to service areas that can demonstrate, through measurable outcomes, enhancements in the capacity of families and communities to care for and protect children and youth who would otherwise be placed in the care of the Director.

Roles and Responsibilities in Family Development

Role of Headquarters

Headquarters is responsible for setting out what the ministry intends to achieve through family development and how it intends to achieve those results with the available financial resources. Headquarters' responsibilities within this role are:

- to develop co-operatively with the regional authorities clear objectives, intended outcomes, performance measures and targets for family development
- to communicate to the regions the services and programs that represent best or promising practice, and the performance criteria for those programs
- in co-operation with the regional authorities, to strengthen quality assurance by communicating to regional authorities the expectations for family development services, including outcomes, performance targets and specific reporting requirements regarding those performance measures
- to develop the infrastructure to support the delivery of family development services within the regions (templates, payment mechanisms, practice guidelines, technical and systems support, etc.)
- to set out the requirements for regional authorities to account for and report family development expenditures in a consistent format
- to specify the minimal requirements for regional authorities to demonstrate that they use appropriate processes for planning and monitoring family development services
- to co-ordinate and share information on best/promising practice
- to assess the effectiveness of regions in achieving goals
- to assist the regions in ensuring limited resources are targeted to evidence-based programs and services that contribute to a community of family's capacity to care for and protect vulnerable children, particularly those who would otherwise come into the Director's care
- to support regional authorities in building culturally-appropriate programs and services through an adaptive process of policy development and implementation that includes community and staff consultation in a continuous and comprehensive fashion
- to promote the development of healthy organizations and well-trained staff with a commitment to culturally appropriate services and working with other informal and formal helping services in a more holistic fashion
- to provide legislation, regulations, legal agreements, policies, standards or guidelines as a context for service delivery.

Role of the Regional Authorities

Regional authorities are responsible for providing family development services that will be the most effective in achieving the ministry's goals for family development, given the needs of the region and the available funds. It is the responsibility of each region:

- to identify the target population in their region
- to design, develop and evaluate programs that reflect the ministry's principles and goals of family development and that address the needs of the target population in the region

- to develop goals and design and implement programs and outcome measures for family development in a way that is culturally sensitive and appropriate to the needs of the target population
- to use appropriate processes for planning and collecting data on family development programs and services
- to ensure that communities and those receiving services have the opportunity to be involved in the development of family development programs and services
- to monitor, review, and evaluate the effectiveness of family development programs in strengthening vulnerable families and enhancing community capacity from the perspective of clients, workers and community
- to produce service reports and annual operating plans, based on strategic plans
- to work with relevant contractors to modify their services, as needed, to support the ministry's objectives
- to provide information to children, youth and families from other cultures, not only about the province's child welfare legislation and the ministry's mandate, but also about differences in expectations regarding parenting and discipline
- to ensure that staff are delivering services in a culturally appropriate way

Role of the Social Worker

Social workers are often the primary contact with children, families and communities and are responsible for identifying and responding to the needs of individual families for family development services. However, parts of the social worker's role and responsibilities are shared by other frontline workers. These include child protection workers, regional authority staff mandated to participate in intake, assessment and planning, and staff of community agencies and other non-formal services involved in direct service delivery to children and families.

The main responsibilities of social workers are:

- to build respectful and collaborative relationships with vulnerable children and youth and their families
- to gather specific information about individual family members and their circumstances
- to help the family identify people within the extended family and social and community networks who could become part of the family's informal support system
- to emphasize and build on individual, family and community assets and resources through a strengths-based assessment and service plan
- to engage the family and members of their informal support system as full partners in the assessment and planning process
- to facilitate access to programs and services that enhance individual, family and community strengths and capacity to care for and protect children and youth
- to facilitate the implementation of an integrated case management/wraparound process to make the service plan happen
- to advocate for the well-being of children, youth and families
- to participate in the evaluation of the service plan and related programs and services
- to recognize that knowledge of and appreciation for the ethnicity and culture of children, youth and family is essential to providing meaningful and effective family development services

Assessment and Planning in Family Development

The family development framework proposes an ecological, or holistic, strengths-based assessment and planning process that:

- is respectful of the family's cultural values and preferences
- places family members in primary roles and promotes their ability to determine their own needs and goals, and the ways in which these could best be met
- recognises and promotes informal support systems within the extended family, kinship network and community, and
- focuses on interventions and services that strengthen the capacity of family members, informal helpers and the community to care for, protect and support the growth and development of children and youth who might otherwise be placed in the care of the Director.

An ecological or holistic assessment views the child, youth and family within the context of their environment, including their extended family and communties, as well as the larger society. It takes into consideration socio-demographic and cultural factors that influence family life, as well as the characteristics of individual family members, and family structure and relationships. A strengths-based assessment and planning process is based on the belief that most families who come to the attention of social service agencies have the capacity to care for and protect their children if they are provided with the right tools and support. A strengths-based approach seeks to identify individual and family assets that can be accessed to ensure the safety and well-being of children and youth, and places more emphasis on capacity-building through extended family and community resources than it does on the delivery of professional services.

The proposed assessment and planning process is not intended to replace child protection screening, risk or parenting capacity assessments currently available to social workers in child protection practice, or diagnostic and eligibilty assessments that are used in other service areas, such as child and youth mental health and services to children and youth with special needs. These specialized assessments and services are fundamental components of an effective child welfare service delivery system and will continue to be provided to children and youth and their families when appropriate and/or required to enhance service planning.

The proposed assessment and planning process is intended to be implemented at the initial or intake phase of the service delivery system, under sections 16(1) and (2) of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, which states:

> ***16*** *(1) On receiving a report about a child under section 14, 15 or 27, a director must assess the information in the report.*
>
> *(2) After the assessment, the director may*
>
> *(a) offer support services to the child and family*
>
> *(b) refer the child and family to a community agency, or*
>
> *(c) investigate the child's need for protection.*

When the assessment determines that there is an apparent section 13 concern, particularly if the concern requires a priority 1 or priority 2 response under the Risk Assessment Model, a protection investigation must still be conducted in accordance with child protection practice standards. Providing staff with the flexibility to select the appropriate response depending on the circumstances is a necessary precedent for implementing the family development framework.

The table below provides an overview of the proposed assessment and planning process, setting out the goals of assessment and the related planning and service objectives for each.

Assessment Goals	Planning Objectives	Service Objectives
1. To build respectful and collaborative relationships with family members and actual or potential helpers within the family's social/kinship circle and community.	1. To place family members and community helpers in primary roles in the assessment and service planning processes.	1. To ensure family members and community helpers are actively engaged and involved in making the service plan happen.
2. To develop an understanding of the cultural norms, values, and traditions that are important to the family.	2. To ensure the assessment and service planning process is respectful of the family's cultural values and preferences.	2. To ensure interventions and services are culturally appropriate.
3. To gather comprehensive information in a format that assists the family, community helpers, and service providers to identify family and community strengths and potential resources.	3. To develop a plan that acknowledges and builds on existing strengths and resources through a blend of informal and formal supports.	3. To access, support and reinforce (when necessary) family and community strengths and resources.
4. To identify vulnerabilities and/or intergenerational issues that heighten the likelihood of serious problems occurring and protective mechanisms or characteristics that promote or enhance child and family wellness and resilience.	4. To apply reliable research-based knowledge to identify those interventions or services that show the most promising outcomes for children, youth and families who face similar vulnerabilities and circumstances.	4. To ensure effective supports and services are provided as early as possible to reinforce or enhance family resilience and promote the development of protective mechanisms.
5. To determine whether service planning could be enhanced through the use of specialized and/or diagnostic assessments.	5. To be flexible and comprehensive in service planning.	5. To ensure the best *fit* in supports and services for the family, and the best possible outcomes for the children and youth.

The proposed assessment will seek to identify strengths and resources, as well as potential vulnerabilities or risks, within the following domains:

- Child/Youth
- Parental/Family
- Community

The ministry will develop practice guidelines for a strengths-based assessment and planning process that is consistent with the overall goals of family development to guide and inform social workers in the regions. In the meantime, regional authorities are encouraged to initiate assessment

and planning processes that are consistent with the ministry's expectations for family development programs and services, as outlined in the framework, while still ensuring compliance with existing policy and standards.

Outcomes of Family Development

In order to know whether family development is leading to improved outcomes for vulnerable children and youth and their families, the outcomes themselves have to be identified, then measured and monitored.

The companion document to *Working with Community to Support Children, Youth and Their Families: A System of Care* has begun the process of identifying evidence-based family development programs and outcomes associated with these programs. Further review and analysis of family development programs and client outcomes is planned, and will link with other efforts in the ministry to develop outcome indicators, including the ministry's accountability framework.

Organizational Outcomes

Organizational outcomes are the expected results for the service delivery system or operators of the organization and are not changes in the well-being or status of clients served.

Achievement of the following organizational outcomes should substantially increase the likelihood that the wellness and resiliency of children, youth and families who receive family development services will be enhanced, thereby reducing the number of children and youth needing to come into the Director's care.

1. Strengths-based assessment and service planning processes are developed for children, youth and families.
2. Families have access to appropriate and effective services that are intended to strengthen their capacity to care for and protect children and youth who might otherwise come into the care of the Director.
3. Aboriginal and other cultural and ethnic communities are involved in planning to ensure that programs and services are culturally appropriate and accessible to families in their communities.
4. Families have access to early and ongoing assessment and, where required, integrated case management/wraparound processes to ensure a co-ordinated service response to the multiple needs of each child, youth and family.
5. The regional authority has improved community-based partnerships to promote family wellness and the prevention of child maltreatment.
6. Fewer children are required to come into the Director's care.

Next Steps

The implementation of the family development framework is a work in progress. The necessary changes to policy, programs and practice are well under way but will take time and further consultation before each part of the framework is complete.

The next steps to be undertaken by the ministry include:

- developing practice guidelines for family development assessment and planning that integrate a flexible response to reported child welfare concerns while confirming the safety and well-being of the child as the paramount considerations. Practice guidelines will provide direction on:
  - balancing the need to accurately assess any future risk to children while assessing family strengths
  - when to link to other services, specialized assessment tools and program areas
  - when to investigate and complete a full risk assessment and when to use a strength-based assessment
  - developing effective service plans, based on thorough assessment
- completing descriptions of family development programs in the companion document to *Working with Community to Support Children, Youth and Families: A System of Care*, including performance indicators associated with them
- upgrading intake procedures to assist implementation of the family development framework
- developing strengths-based training in family development concepts for regional authorities' staff and community partners
- identifying programs and services indicated as successful for working with Aboriginal children and youth and their families and communities
- reviewing and revising pertinent policy from Volume 2 and 2A, including direction on the use of Support Services Agreements
- in co-operation with the regional authorities, developing indicators for the organizational outcomes

To receive additional copies of *A Framework for Family Development (Protecting Children Within Their Families and Communities)*, contact:

Government Publications Services
742 Vanalman Avenue
Victoria BC V8V 1X4

Fax: (250) 952-4442

Please refer to publication MCF 03.